

3/15/10 - March 15, 2010

**CITY OF EAU CLAIRE
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES**

Meeting of March 15, 2010

City Hall, Council Chambers

7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Messrs. Duax, FitzGerald, Hibbard, Kaiser, Kayser, Klinkhammer, Seymour

Staff Present: Messrs. Ivory, Reiter, Noel, Genskow, Spitz

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kaiser.

1. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Ivory provided an overview of the draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The plan was drafted by the City™s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) based on direction provided in the City™s Comprehensive Plan, which places an emphasis on examining the bicycle and pedestrian environment within the community. The objective of the draft plan is to set forth the framework for examining the current pedestrian and bicycle environment in the community, and outlining public and private initiatives to improve and promote walking and bicycling in Eau Claire.

Mr. Ivory noted that in drafting the plan, BPAC has attempted to address the diverse nature of user populations within the community as people walk and use bicycles for a variety of reasons, including recreation and commuting. In addition, the Commission attempted to accommodate various age levels, skill levels, and those with disabilities when drafting the recommendations.

Mr. Ivory reviewed the recommendations in the plan and stated that a number of changes had been made from the original draft prepared in October of 2009. Since October, BPAC had made these changes based on input received at various public meetings and contacts with individuals, as well as community and neighborhood organizations. Mr. Ivory highlighted a number of revisions based on Plan Commission review of the original draft on November 16, 2009.

Bob Eierman, 3007 Coltman Lane, Chairperson for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, spoke in support of the plan. Mr. Eierman stated that the plan emphasizes the importance of bicycling and walking in the community and that Eau Claire needs to consider bicycling and pedestrian issues in its everyday decision-making.

Mr. Duax discussed the implementation section of the plan. Mr. Ivory stated that timeframes for the implementation of the plan™s recommendations are included in the plan, but that implementation will be subject to factors, including funding and timing of street construction projects.

Mr. Hibbard stated that he felt that the plan did not contain definite standards and didn™t address the following: future signalization of intersections, specific barriers of the disabled, issues at major intersections such as Clairemont/Hastings Way, and seasonal issues such as snow removal from sidewalks.

Mr. FitzGerald moved to recommend approval of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as part of the City™s Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Kayser seconded and the motion carried with Mr. Hibbard voting no.

**2. REZONING (Z-1463-10) “ TR-1A to R-3P and C-2P, Prairie Park; and
PRELIMINARY CONDO PLAT (P-2-10) “ Prairie Park; and
SITE PLAN (SP-1001) “ Phase 1, Prairie Park**

Mr. Hibbard left the meeting.

Chair Kaiser stated the project has already had a public hearing and there was an pending motion for approval from the February 15, 2010 meeting. The applicant asked to table consideration to this meeting.

Applicant, Jim Rooney of Rooney Properties, spoke in support of his project. He reviewed several of the City™s Comprehensive Plan objectives and policies and how his development proposal met them. The projects meets goals of compact development, open space and amenities, creates neighborhood>

Bill Albright, builder for the project with Heartland Homes, stated the project is located in the utility service area and the City>

Rick Harrison, site designer for the project with Rick Harrison Design Studio, stated his firm has done many projects similar to this across the country. The project provides for pedestrian and bicycle paths and is almost anti-car. Each attached multi-family building is individually setback from each other to provide better panoramic views. He believed this project will provide an example for other area developers to emulate. The 150-unit apartment building was chosen to reduce land consumption instead of having ten, 15-unit apartment buildings and associated paving.

Janelle Henning, Town of Washington Administrator, spoke against the project. She stated though this site is in the City it still has multi-jurisdictional implications. She stated the proposal is not consistent with the City™s Comprehensive Plan. She thought the

developer would have come back to the commission since last meeting with more of a compromised plan. She said the site is not in close proximity to jobs, schools, and transit services, consistent with smart growth principles, does not preserve farmland, and does not encourage community and compatibility with adjacent farmland uses. Ms. Henning said the proposal is also not consistent with the City™s zoning ordinance (18.10.040) because of compatibility issues (negative impacts to agricultural farms and businesses) and the overall scale and massing of the multi-family. She said it is not the right time or right site for this development, but did say the commercial piece is the most compatible. She asked to have a stakeholders meeting to work out various concerns more specifically.

John Stockham, 424 Virginia Terrace, Madison, Wisconsin, stated he is the Town of Washington consultant planner and has been working on extra-territorial area negotiations. He was impressed with the joint discussion from the last meeting. He said comprehensive plans are meant for general planning and can be cherry-picked depending on your side. He said the project is leap-frog development. Sub-area planning should really occur first before a project of this magnitude impacts existing development. Economic development should not trump good planning. He asked to deny the project because good planning calls for it.

Michael Peterson, Town of Washington Chairman, asked to deny the project and set up a sub-committee to review the project and finish an area sub-plan.

Doug Reece, 615 Summer Street, stated expanding the City out increases the service tax burden on the whole community.

Larry Heagle, 4896 Hobbs Road, Fall Creek, Wisconsin, stated the developer should find space inside the City to develop this type of project.

Mark Koger, owner of Equity Livestock at 5150 Hwy. 53 South, stated on a weekly basis, 30 to 25 semi-trucks and 75 to 80 smaller trucks enter and exit his business. This business was built at the location in 1972 because of easy access to the interstate and he does not want to be forced out because of City encroachment.

Bob Sloan, 6464 Otter Creek Road, thought the proposal creates too many negative issues and it does not keep in mind the larger community good.

Jon Bowe, 25943 County Hwy. O, Cadott, Wisconsin, supported the housing project because the development would create jobs for his T&J Concrete Foundation business. He said he has worked with the developer before and his projects are of excellent quality.

Kari and Doug Graff, 5386 Graff Road, spoke against the project. They farm the adjacent land and fear trespassing with more homes. They thought there is no need for housing in the area.

Paul Madsen, 907 Sandalwood Drive, Altoona, Wisconsin, stated this project would help create/retain jobs associated with his landscaping firm. He said the developer adds attractive landscaping amenities to his developments.

Chuck Geroux, 5203 Deerfield Road, stated a project of this scale and density should be located in a redevelopment district.

Karen Wirtanen, 5997 Hillside Park, had noise and smell concerns with a new housing development being located next to a livestock operation.

Rollie Hicks, 1110 Kathryn Drive, stated there are no services to the site like transit and schools.

Mr. Rooney stated when the City annexed the property it meant the farm land would not be preserved. He also said they have tried to work with the Town of Washington staff but have not heard back from them.

Mr. Duax stated the item should be postponed because the commission did not have all members present and the developer/town disagreements should be attempted to be resolved first. He reminded the audience it was the adjacent towns who filed lawsuit against the City because of extra-territorial development disputes.

Mr. Fitzgerald liked the proposal but was concerned with adjacent land use compatibility issues. He said the current City/towns negotiations should provide sub-plan for this area so the developer has better direction. The development is premature and he said he will vote against the project. Mr. Kayser concurred.

Mr. Klinkhammer and Mr. Seymour thought the development had merit and wanted a decision made so the project could go on to the City Council.

Some commissioners cited several problems with the development: (1) there is no sub-plan to guide future land use, (2) there are no services like transit and schools nearby, (3) there are agricultural land use incompatibility issues, (4) questions on what is the proper density for the area, and (5) making sure the existing livestock business will not be adversely affected by a new housing development.

Mr. Duax moved to postpone the item until April 5. Mr. Kayser seconded, the motion carried. Mr. Klinkhammer and Mr. Seymour voted nay. Mr. Hibbard abstained.

3. REZONING (Z-1465-10) “ R-1 to R-3P, Gala Street and Soley Avenue; and SITE PLAN (SP-1003) “ Four-plex, Gala Street

Mr. Reiter presented a request to rezone property from R-1 to R-3P and to approve the site plan for a 4-plex. The location is at the northwest corner of Gala Street and Soley Avenue. The project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan which calls for medium residential use in this location.

Applicant, John Arnette of 4234 Meadowwood Drive, spoke in favor of his project.

No one spoke in opposition.

Mr. Klinkhammer moved to recommend approval of the site plan and rezoning with staff conditions. Mr. FitzGerald seconded, the motion carried.

4. SITE PLAN (SP-1004) “ Xcel Energy Parking Lot, W. Hamilton Avenue

Mr. Reiter presented a request to approve a site plan for an addition to a parking lot at 1414 W. Hamilton Avenue. A new parking lot addition will be created on the east side of the building. The total parking on site will be 500 stalls. 382 are required based on building square footage. A new driveway access on E. Hamilton Avenue will allow another entrance/exit and for better internal circulation.

Mitch Evenson and Dennis Blau of Cedar Corporation, stated Xcel needs to add more parking due to new call-center employment hires. The new parking lot will also help facilitate a phased redevelopment of other parking areas on site. They stated they would meet the City™s parking lot landscaping requirements.

Mr. Kayser moved to recommended approval of the site plan adding a condition that the applicant meets parking lot landscaping requirements. Mr. FitzGerald seconded, the motion carried.

5. DISCUSSION/DIRECTION

A. Code Compliance Items

None.

B. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Seymour asked to have a review on the City™s nonconforming ordinance pertaining to structures damaged because of fire beyond 50% of market value.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of March 1, 2010, were corrected.

Joe Seymour
Secretary